



WESTLAND

DISTILLERY



This week's guest on *Spirits of Whisk(e)y* is Matt Hofmann, CoFounder & Master Distiller at Westland Distillery in Seattle, Washington. Founded in 2010, Westland is widely recognized for an awardwinning line of American single malt whiskeys that rely on regionallygrown ingredients, including locallyproduced peat. In 2015, Matt's work was awarded Whiskey of the Year by the American Distilling Institute, and in 2018, *Whisky Magazine* named him Master Distiller/Blender of the Year at its annual Icons of Whisky America awards ceremony. Listen and learn how Matt, after completing graduate studies in brewing and distilling at HeriotWatt University in Edinburgh, Scotland, returned to his native Pacific Northwest, opened Westland Distillery, and started realizing his whiskey vision. Plus hear Chef Louise Leonard's suggestions for pairing Westland's Garryana Whiskey, a peated American Single Malt aged in Garry Oak, rather than the more common White Oak, with a fireroasted tomahawk steak.



Words from Weezy: Westland Garryana

Obviously I'm pairing this American single malt with Snake River Farms Waygu beef. And specifically a nice marbled tomahawk steak cooked over an open fire in a beautiful setting. I'm also drooling at the thought of cooking some potatoes, fresh rosemary and garlic in beef suet to accompany the steak.

Reference links for Whiskey Chronicles:

<https://whiskyanalysis.com/index.php/background/sourceofwhiskyflavours/>

<https://whiskyanalysis.com/index.php/background/scotchstylewhiskiessinglemaltsvsblends/>

<http://whiskyscience.blogspot.com/2011/03/potstilldistillation.html>

<http://whiskyscience.blogspot.com/2011/03/potstilldistillation.html>

<http://whiskyscience.blogspot.com/2011/11/fermentationflavours.html>



LEADING THE AMERICAN SINGLE MALT WHISKEY CATEGORY:

WESTLAND DISTILLERY

** Exploring New Possibilities in Single Malt Whiskey**

** American-Made Single Malt Whiskey Produced from Regional Barley Varieties**

** Expressing the Terroir of the Pacific Northwest **



BACKGROUND

Founded in 2010 and acquired by Remy-Cointreau in 2017, Seattle's [Westland Distillery](#) is bringing a new and uniquely American voice to the world of single malt whiskey by exploring possibilities that have been ignored for generations. Along the way, Westland has quickly become recognized as the country's leading producer of American Single Malt Whiskey. While the distillery uses the same basic ingredients and processes used for centuries by traditional Old World single malt producers, it doesn't simply seek to replicate the results of its Scottish predecessors. Instead, Westland works to create whiskeys that reflect the distinct qualities of its time, place and culture in the Pacific Northwest. "We honor the central traditions of whiskey-making that have been in place for hundreds of years," says Co-Founder Matt Hofmann. "But rather than trying to mimic the character of Scotch whisky, our goal is to express our own unique sense of place and prove that America can produce single malts that can stand tall with the finest whiskeys in the world."

All of Westland's expressions are distilled at the Seattle distillery from 100% malted barley and fermented with a unique Belgian Saison brewer's yeast before maturing in one of a variety of cask types, including new American oak, ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry. "From that foundational starting point," says Hofmann, "each expression then offers a variation on our house style that departs from expected conventions of single malt whisky, each in their own way. At the core of that style are unique approaches to barley, yeast and oak:

ROASTED MALTS: Inspired by Pacific Northwest beer culture, the use of roasted malts brings a wide range of flavors not usually found in traditional single malt whiskies that rely solely on conventional pale malt. In addition to using Pale Malt, Westland uses Pale Chocolate Malt, Munich Malt, Brown Malt and Extra Special Malt. The distillery is also working with local farmers and maltsters across Washington and with breeders at Washington State University's Bread Lab, led by Dr. Steve Jones, to develop entirely new varieties of barley never before used in whiskey. "Our aim is to create single malt whiskey that has a real sense of place. The prevailing dogma in our industry that barley doesn't impact flavor is something we categorically reject," explains Hofmann, who was named one of *Forbes Magazine's* 2015 Thirty Under 30 in America, and *Wine Enthusiast's* 2016 Forty Under 40 Tastemakers. "By breeding for flavor and not just yield we're proving that claim false."

BELGIAN BREWER'S YEAST: Westland's use of a unique Belgian Saison Brewer's Yeast is a big departure from tradition that contributes aromatics and notes of citrus, clove and red fruits during fermentation.

HIGH-QUALITY VIRGIN OAK CASKS: While Westland uses a variety of oak types, such as conventional ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry casks, they fill predominantly into virgin oak. More importantly, however, is the quality of that oak. Westland sources only slow-growth trees and air-dried staves as wine makers do rather than the more common kiln-dried oak the Bourbon industry uses. While these casks cost considerably more, the result is worth the expense as the high quality oak has less tannins and brings sweetness and approachability to the whiskies.

Westland has also led the formal establishment of the emerging American Single Malt Whiskey category by starting the [American Single Malt Whiskey Commission](#), which brings together single malt producers from across the United States with a mission to gain greater consumer awareness and understanding of the category along with an official definition of the category by the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Trade Bureau.

WHISKIES

Each of Westland's American Single Malt Whiskies exhibit the fundamental intention of their house style: a balanced, grain-forward whiskey that honors tradition but also moves it forward in a new way. Westland's whiskies have been recognized globally, with each product in their core range receiving a score of 96 points or higher, and collecting a [long list of awards](#). In 2016, the distillery was named *Whisky Magazine's* World Craft Producer of the Year. In 2018, Matt Hofmann was named American Master Distiller of the Year and the distillery won American Single Malt of the Year at the same show.

CORE RANGE

Westland American Oak Single Malt Whiskey

(46%ABV, 750ml, \$59.99 SRP)

The initial nose provides lemon and orange custard backed by freshly produced waffle cone. Shortly after, a rich creaminess emerges with creme brûlée and chocolate custard while a hint of jasmine hides just beneath the surface. The first sip confirms the creamy and rich fruit custard notes of the nose, adding an element of Rainier

cherries. After five minutes, melting Swiss chocolate is revealed with a hint of almond. Extended tastings brings out bananas and cream with Turkish coffee.

Westland Sherry Wood American Single Malt Whiskey

(46%ABV, 750ml, \$69.99 SRP)

The nose offers immediate richness, with honey-dipped oatmeal raisin cookies. Maple syrup follows close behind, drizzled over banana pancakes. The palate initially offers some kiwi with more maple and raisin syrup notes. Extended tastings offers an array of sweet cookies and pastries, getting darker and richer with time before eventually ceding the palate to stewed yellow fruits on the finish.

Westland Peated American Single Malt Whiskey

(46%ABV, 750ml, \$69.99 SRP)

The nose starts off with a background of nuttiness accompanied by smoldering moss and flamed orange peel. The peat leaps from the palate, expressing campfire notes, iodine, and roasted pistachios. With time, the smoldering moss on the nose evolves into burning embers and roasted plantains. The palate also transitions over time, moving towards significant earth notes, green herbs and increasing iodine towards the finish.

OUTPOST RANGE



Rooted in true provenance, the Outpost Range of American Single Malt Whiskies reflects Westland Distillery’s core mission to push beyond the old world conventions of single malt. Launched beginning in fall 2020, Westland goes beyond the limitations of the industry to pursue new possibilities in the form of three expressions that will be released annually: Garryana American Single Malt, Colere American Single Malt, and Solum American Single Malt; each whiskey explores a central raw ingredient in single malt whiskey with each name inspired by terroir. “In everything we do, we seek to express this sense of place, which is inherently progressive in the world of whiskey,” says Hofmann. “After a decade, our Core Range of whiskies stands now as an opening statement.”

Unlike the whiskies in the Core Range, which are designed to be consistent in flavor profile, whiskies in the Outpost Range are intentionally unique from year to year.

Garryana American Single Malt Whiskey

(50%ABV, 750ml, \$149.99 SRP)

Garryana (named after the scientific name for the unique oak, *Quercus garryana*) explores Westland’s native species of Pacific Northwest oak in single malt whiskey. In addition to expressing provenance in whiskey, Garryana is an entirely new species of oak to the world of whiskey, where only a handful of oak species over the

course of hundreds of years have been used for aging. To create this whiskey, Westland built an entire economy for sourcing this rare and protected raw material. Now in its 5th edition, Garryana stands as a widely acclaimed and anticipated annual release that demonstrates the new possibilities yet to be explored in single malt.

Colere American Single Malt Whiskey

(50%ABV, 750ml, \$149.99 SRP)

Colere, from a Latin verb meaning “to cultivate,” represents leaving behind the well-trod territory of ubiquitous grains and venturing into the thousands of uncharted barley varieties whose flavor has yet to be considered. This expression represents a reconnection to agriculture for the whiskey industry. In an industry that adheres to the belief that barley doesn’t impact flavor, Westland has worked for years with Washington State University’s Bread Lab, located in the Skagit Valley, local maltsters, and local farmers to develop new varieties of barley that prove otherwise. Westland’s work with these partners prioritize flavor in breeding barley varieties and more sustainable agricultural methods. In doing so, Westland positions itself as a thought leader in not only global single malt but also the future of agriculture more broadly. To date, they have distilled over 18 different varieties of barley (which is more than the entire Scotch whisky industry combined), and has committed nearly 40% of their annual production to these unique barleys.

Solum American Single Malt Whiskey

(50%ABV, 750ml, \$149.99 SRP)

Latin for “soil,” Solum explores local peat in whiskey. Peated whiskey has long been a tradition in single malt, always relying on peat sourced in the U.K. As longtime fans of peated whiskey, Westland has pursued a vision for locally grown barley malted with locally harvested peat for nearly a decade. Since the supply chain for peated malt has never existed in this country, once again Westland built the economy from the ground up. For years now Westland has been sourcing peat from a bog 90 minutes away from the distillery in Seattle and using it to malt barley in Skagit Valley, allowing them to distill a peated whiskey with true provenance. **This whiskey is planned for release in 2023.*

LIMITED-EDITION SPECIAL RELEASES

In addition to the Core Range and Outpost Range expressions, Westland releases a variety of bespoke limited editions on an ongoing basis to further express the Pacific Northwest terroir in new and interesting whiskeys. Westland celebrates its annual [Peat Week](#) each fall with a heavily peated festival bottling, collaborates with regional breweries, such as Black Raven and Holy Mountain, to release Cask Exchange expressions that are aged in barrels used to create special beers, and collaborates with iconic Seattle outerwear company, C.C. Filson Co., to release Coldfoot, an expression that pays homage to the original pioneers of the Pacific Northwest and those who braved the 1800s’ Klondike Gold Rush. Distillery visitors can also select a hand-filled bottle from a selection of single casks.

THE DISTILLERY

Located in the SoDo neighborhood of Seattle, Westland Distillery welcomes visitors interested in learning about the whiskey-making process and experiencing the ethos behind this pioneering brand. The Distillery is also an ideal setting for private events surrounded by casks and just feet away from copper stills and fermenting tanks. Tours are available by appointment at 2931 First Avenue, Seattle.

For information about Westland, please visit www.westlanddistillery.com.

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